United Nations E/2016/80

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 July 2016
English
Original: French

2016 session
24 July 2015-27 July 2016
Agenda item 12 (d)
Coordination, programme and other questions: long-term programme of support for Haiti

Letter dated 27 July 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the comments of the Permanent Mission of Haiti to the United Nations on the draft report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti of the Economic and Social Council for 2016 (the final version of which will be published under the symbol E/2016/79) (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Economic and Social Council under agenda item 12 (d).

(*Signed*) Denis **Régis**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 27 July 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

Comments of the Permanent Mission of Haiti to the United Nations on the draft report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti for 2016

The Permanent Mission of Haiti regrets that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti was unable to travel to the field for a thorough review of the current situation and the challenges facing the Haitian people and the interim Government, in particular during this transition period in which the political, economic, social and humanitarian challenges are particularly acute.

The Permanent Mission hopes that such a visit, which is of great interest to the Haitian authorities, can take place in a timely manner and lead to recommendations relevant to the aims of the Economic and Social Council, all United Nations bodies, the Government of the Republic of Haiti and all of its cooperating partners. In this regard, the Permanent Mission will maintain contact with the Advisory Group and will share the views of the Haitian Government on a possible timetable for such a visit.

The Permanent Mission has taken note of the findings and conclusions of the report. It acknowledges the negative impact of the political crisis on the social and economic situation. It supports the call for constructive dialogue with political actors to find an interim governance arrangement to promote the organization of the next presidential, legislative and local elections, as well as the installation of a democratically elected President.

The President of the Republic and the Government, in accordance with their mandate, shall make every effort to restore confidence in the electoral process interrupted in 2015 and create the necessary climate for holding presidential and legislative elections, with the first round to take place on 9 October 2016. These elections are essential to ensuring the return to constitutional order on 7 February 2017, institutional stability, the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, and the resumption of the development process.

The Permanent Mission shares the concerns expressed by the Advisory Group on reductions in public expenditure, as a result in particular of the drastic decrease in the amount of official development assistance (ODA). It agrees with the proposals made by the Advisory Group to ensure better functioning of State institutions as a prerequisite for more substantial assistance from donors, including direct budgetary support.

However, we must note that the significant reduction in ODA during this transition period severely impairs the continuation of essential public investment and basic social programmes, and undeniably contributes to the worsening of the economic, social and humanitarian situation and the climate of insecurity, thereby seriously penalizing a significant proportion of the population while increasing the extreme poverty and marginalization of disadvantaged groups. The lack of engagement by donors comes at a time when the country needs the support of its partners more than ever, as it suffers the consequences of a drought affecting almost

a third of the population and the cholera epidemic continues to experience a highly alarming resurgence, as outlined in the report.

The Permanent Mission supports the appeal to the international community and Haiti's development partners to play their role fully so as to avoid any gaps in granting it assistance, as well as a further deterioration of the economic, social and humanitarian situation, in particular the acute crises related to food insecurity, the precarious conditions in health and sanitation, the cholera epidemic and the mass repatriation of Haitian migrants.

Similarly, the Permanent Mission supports the Advisory Group's call to strengthen the effectiveness of development assistance for Haiti, which, as the report rightly emphasizes, is based on the capability of partners to adequately connect short-term priorities and long-term development. It supports any movement towards greater flexibility in the use of funding available under ODA.

The Permanent Mission fully supports the view expressed by the Advisory Group that mechanisms for ensuring aid effectiveness, under the External Aid Coordination Framework for the Development of Haiti, should not fall victim to the current crisis. The Government, for its part, will do everything in its power to contribute to better coordination, as well as to the improved transparency and efficiency of ODA. It is greatly to be hoped that current priorities, including financial and logistical needs related to the organization of elections over the next six months, will be taken fully into account.

In conclusion, the Permanent Mission takes particular interest in preserving and consolidating the achievements of previous decades, on the political, democratic and institutional levels as well as with regard to development.

However, the Permanent Mission is deeply concerned about the unwarranted disengagement of cooperation partners and fears that this lack of interest may work to undermine the hard-won achievements of recent years in establishing the rule of law and in regard to the Sustainable Development Goals. These achievements are currently under threat, as the Advisory Group recognized. Today, a new wave of international responsibility, solidarity and cooperation is clearly needed.

The Permanent Mission endorses the Advisory Group's call to mobilize the appropriate level of resources to enable Haiti to address the political and economic requirements and priorities of the current transition period, while also preparing for the challenges of long-term economic development.